



Arizona State Board of Nursing

4747 North 7th Street, Suite 200
Phoenix, AZ 85014-3655
Phone (602) 889-5150 Fax - (602) 889-5155
E-Mail: arizona@azbn.gov
Home Page: <http://www.azbn.gov>

An advisory opinion adopted by AZBN is an interpretation of what the law requires. While an advisory opinion is not law, it is more than a recommendation. In other words, an advisory opinion is an official opinion of AZBN regarding the practice of nursing as it relates to the functions of nursing. Facility policies may restrict practice further in their setting and/or require additional expectations related to competency, validation, training, and supervision to assure the safety of their patient population and or decrease risk.

OPINION: ABANDONMENT OF PATIENTS
APPROVED: X NOT APPROVED:
DATE: 11/02
REVISED DATE: 3/06, 11/09
ORIGINATING COMMITTEE:
SCOPE OF PRACTICE COMMITTEE

Within the Scope of Practice of X RN X LPN

ADVISORY OPINION ABANDONMENT OF PATIENTS

STATEMENT OF SCOPE

Registered Nurses (RN) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) are required to provide reasonable notice to the supervisor for the continuity of patients care, rather than terminate the relationship without notification, which is defined as abandonment. The following requirements constitute patient abandonment:

I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. The nurse must have first ACCEPTED the patient assignment, thus establishing a nurse-patient relationship. Accepting a patient assignment varies from setting to setting and requires a clear understanding of workload and agreement to provide care, AND then
- B. DISENGAGED the nurse-patient relationship without giving reasonable notice and report to the qualified person (supervisor, nurse, etc.) so that others can make arrangements for continuation of nursing care.
- C. Examples of patient abandonment include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Leaving without giving the supervisor or qualified person adequate notice
 - ii. Leaving without giving report to a qualified person
 - iii. Accepting an assignment of patient care and then leaving the nursing unit or patient care setting without notifying the qualified person
- D. Situations NOT considered to be patient abandonment, but are examples of employer-employee or contract issues of which the Board has no jurisdiction (salary, work conditions, hiring and termination policies):
 1. No call/no show for work
 2. Refusal to accept an assignment or a nurse-patient relationship
 3. Refusal to work mandatory overtime
 4. Refusal to work additional hours or shifts
 5. Ending the employer-employee relationship without providing the employer with a period of time to obtain replacement staff for that specific position
 6. Refusal to work in an unfamiliar, specialized, or "high tech" area when there has been no orientation, no educational preparation or employment experience
 7. Resigning from a position and not fulfilling the remaining posted work schedule
 8. Refusal to "float" to an unfamiliar unit to accept a full patient assignment

II. RATIONALE

To provide the nursing community with guidelines to clarify those circumstances which may be characterized as patient-abandonment.

III. REFERENCES

California Board of Nursing, (2009). Scope of Practice. Retrieved from www.rn.ca.gov/practice/rns/htm

Kentucky Board of Nursing. (2009). Scope of Practice. Retrieved from www.kbn.ky.gov/practice/aos.htm

Maryland Board of Nursing. (2009). Scope of Practice. Retrieved from www.mbon.org/main.php?v=norm&p=0&c=practice/decregs.html

Texas Board of Nursing. (2009). Scope of Practice. Retrieved from www.bne.state.tx.us/practice/gen_practice.html#Scope_of_Practice